first time, we have now increased the load carrying capacity plus 8 tonnes plus 2 tonnes tolerance. For example, the carrying capacity is given 58 tonnes. The permissible carrying capacity will be 8 tonnes plus 2 tonnes, that is, 68 tonnes. That is permissible carrying capacity. Loading which is going beyond this permissible limit accounts for overloading. What are we doing for that? The hon. Minister, Shri Laluji, last year undertook a surprised inspection. The State Minister, Shri Rathwaji, and myself also conducted some inspections to check the overloading. How does overloading happen? It is mostly on loose and bulk commodities, for example, coal. For that, we are now installing weighing machines—in-motion weighing machines as well as static weighing machines. In the originating point itself, we weigh the rakes and see that no overloading takes place. If it happens in the mid way, for that also we have in-motion weighing machines to check it. In order to check it effectively, we have introduced a punitive clause, saying that if you overload, it will attract three times the normal high-class rate which means it is very punitive in nature. That is how we are preventing overloading in Indian Railways. In fact, in Tamil Nadu, during checking we found only marginal increase by way of overloading, and we found that not much is there in that sense.

Threat from Atmospheric Brown Cloud

*342. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC), a terminology generally used for the enormous blanket of pollution comprising ash, acids, etc., reduces the chances of monsoon rains substantially in the sub-continent thereby causing potential threat to the agricultural harvests;

(b) if so, the measures taken/proposed to be taken by Government to tackle the threat;

(c) whether any study to assess its impact on our country has been carried out;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC) refers to the high loading of pollutants in the atmosphere consisting of mixture of anthropogenic sulphates, nitrates, organics, black carbon, dust, fly ash particles, and natural aerosols such as sea salt and mineral dust. The brownish colour of cloud is due to the absorption and scattering of solar ultraviolet radiation by black carbon; soil derived dust, fly ash and nitrogen oxide. The ABC phenomenon occurs over several world regions, and is a seasonal phenomenon.

The precise impacts of pollutant loading over monsoon rain and agriculture are still under study, and an international program has been initiated by the world community to better understand the origins, inventories and impacts of Atmospheric Brown Cloud.

(b) The Government of India has taken several measures to reduce the pollutant loading e.g. introduction of tightened emission norms for vehicles, improvement in fuel quality in transport sector, use of cleaner fuels, introduction of electrostatic precipitators in thermal power plants, introduction of biogas plants and improved biomass stoves especially, in rural areas. These measures are aimed to improve the air quality by reducing the pollution loading.

(c) to (e) A program named INDOEX (Indian Ocean Experiment) undertaken during 1996—1999 with the participation by the Indian scientists, had drawn the attention of the international community on the issues pertaining to ABC. The preliminary investigation of effects of pollution loading on winter rice and winter rains was undertaken for India through a modeling approach.

India has also now formally joined the international effort through Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC) programme initiating more observations as well as undertaking impact studies. The programme covers both the observational as well as the impact studies on agriculture, hydrological cycle, health and monsoons/climate. However at this stage, it is premature to establish linkages between the Atmospheric Brown Cloud and climate change.

DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Minister has said that a preliminary investigation of effects of pollution loading on winter rice was undertaken. I would like to know from hon. Minister the size of threat of ABC to our winter rice which constitutes a significant part of our rice production.

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: The Indian Ocean Experiment was done and certain predictions were made. But, they were disputed by the Indian scientists. Now, a consortium of International scientists is investigating the entire gamut of this issue. These are all man-made clouds and their origin, their inventories are yet to be found out and no definite opinion can be expressed this way or that way.

DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: What is the modelling approach that is mentioned in the reply? Is it an internationally accepted procedure?

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, certain modelling assumptions were followed during this INDOEX report. But, now, this is a bigger question. The entire world is to be covered. And, I have said a consortium of scientists will continue to study this aspect.

PROF. P.J. KURIAN: Sir, hon. Minister, in his reply, has stated that ABC phenomenon occurs over several world regions. Further, he has stated that India has taken several measures to reduce pollutant loading. In this connection, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that this pollutant loading materials are more emitted by developed countries and because of those emissions, not only ABC phenomenon but also the most dangerous thing, that is, depletion of ozone layer is taking place. If that is so and if the developed world is contributing much more to this phenomenon, then, what are the efforts of the Government of India to convince the developed world and to take corrective measures? Is the Government of India doing something? If yes, what is the extent of success achieved by the Government in this direction?

SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA: Sir, I have stated in my reply the measures we are taking to reduce these pollutants. And, regarding the efforts to be made by developed countries that the hon. Member has mentioned, this relates to the Climate Change Measures. We are a party to the UNFCCC, and the Kyoto Protocol. According to there agreements,

countires, names given in enclosed list under the Kyoto Protocol, have certain commitments for reducing these emission of green house gases and it is for them to fulfil their commitments. Although we do not have any commitment, we are taking various measures for promoting cleaner energy sources and adoptation measures in the climate sector also.

List

Names of the Countries
Australia
Austria
Belarus
Belgium
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
European Economic Community
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Monaco

Names of the Countries
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America

* 343. [The questioners (Shri Rajeev Shukla and Dr. Vijay Mallya) were absent. For answer *vide* page 34]

देश में कुष्ठ रोगी

344. **श्री मंगनी लाल मंडल:** क्या स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि विश्व भर के कुष्ठ रोगियों में से 62 प्रतिशत कुष्ठ रोगी हमारे देश में हैं;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि भारत में सर्वाधिक कुष्ठ रोगी बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश, उड़ीसा, मध्य प्रदेश तथा पश्चिमी बंगाल में पाए जाते हैं;

(ग) क्या यह सच है कि केन्द्र सरकार के द्वारा कुष्ठ रोग उन्मूलन अभियान चलाए जाने के बावजूद वर्तमान स्थिति में कोई गुणात्मक परिवर्तन नहीं हुआ है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस समय कुष्ठ रोगियों की संख्या क्या है और उनकी स्थिति का राज्य-वार ब्यौरा क्या है तथा सरकार द्वारा इस संबंध में की गई कार्रवाई का ब्यौरा क्या है?